

***City of Morgantown***  
**Human Rights Commission**  
**Meeting Minutes November 21, 2013**

**Present:** Mike Fike, Member                      Dave Bott – Administrative Representative  
              Anne Marie Lofaso, Member        Bob Jones – Research Consultant  
              Don Spencer, Chair  
              Fran Whiteman

**Visitors:** Tony Michael, Teewende Sandwidi

**Meeting called to order** by Don Spencer, Chair, at 6:35 p.m.

**Public Session:** Tony Michael of the WVU Extension Institute for Labor Studies and Research introduced himself and expressed interest in the HRC's need survey process as well as the HRC's interest in including employment related issues in the survey process. He stated that there are other organizations in the County which have similar interests including the Mon-Preston Labor Council and an initiative named "Jobs for Justice". Michael suggested that the HRC be in contact with them in its survey process.

Bob Jones introduced Teewende Sandwidi and his daughter Danika from Burkima Faso, West Africa. Sandwidi is affiliated with the United Nations High Commission on Refugees and is especially interested in refugee resettlement and its potential in West Virginia. Sandwidi and his family have been in Morgantown for two years. He will represent West Virginia at the upcoming Congress on Refugee Resettlement in Washington, D.C.

**Communications:** Don Spencer announced that he had received communication from Commission member Warren Harger announcing that he had taken a position as Manager of the Eastview Unity Apartments in Fairmont, and because he and his family are moving to Fairmont, he is resigning as a member of the HRC.

Harger had recommended that the HRC sign up to be a recipient WVU volunteer services through the "Iserve" program. That opportunity is open again at this time. No decision was made to proceed with an application.

The West Virginia State 5 Year Consolidated HUD Plan's hearing was held on October 29 with a follow-up deadline of November 8. No comments were submitted by the HRC although Jan Derry did submit a statement from her agency.

Work continues on the Trail Mural on Diversity at the Community Center at Wiles Hill. The final work session for the construction of "leaves" with names of individuals and /or organizations will be held on Wednesday, December 4, 6-8 p.m.

Because this HRC meeting precedes the deadline for the agenda material for the November Committee of the Whole meeting, Jeff Mikorski has suggested that the HRC

plan to submit legislative material for the next COW meeting in January. Dave Bott reported on the CDBG workshop and hearing – both which have been conducted since the October HRC meeting. Don Spencer attended both for the HRC and has submitted a draft statement which was included in the HRC meeting packet. Additions or corrections to that statement can be received until January 10.

Susan Sullivan has updated the HRC web page on the City web site. Copies of the revised web page were included in the agenda packet.

**Minutes of the October HRC Meeting:** On a motion by Anne Marie Lofaso, seconded by Fran Whiteman, the minutes of the October HRC were votes to be approved unanimously.

**Discussion to Confirm State Legislative Priorities:** Mike Fike, Dave Bott and Don Spencer brought the Commission up to date on city communications. Anne Marie Lofaso and Fran Whiteman discussed the progress on the Federal Employment Non-Discrimination Act, the State Employment and Housing Non-Discrimination Act and the progress nationwide and in the State toward approval of marriage equality legislation. Don Spencer presented a suggested resolution format which could be used by the HRC to communicate matters of policy to the City Council and City Manager. Lofaso and Whiteman agreed to develop resolutions on EHND and marriage equality which could be acted upon at a special meeting of the HRC on Monday, December 2. If approved at that time, the resolutions could be referred on the City Council at their legislative work session scheduled for the evening of December 2. It was agreed that the special meeting would be an announced public meeting to be held at the Council Chambers at noon.

**Second Report on Planning a Need Survey Process:** Bob Jones presented a second draft of the need survey questionnaire for the Commission's review and comments. He provided several options in questions. Commission members reviewed each question and made recommendations on several. The major challenge now in the preparation will be to incorporate the most important elements within a format which will be manageable for persons completing the survey as well as for costs constraints in printing the survey, paying for presenting the survey in the newspaper, and the costs for processing tabulations, crosstabs, and other analysis. A third report will be presented at the December HRC meeting.

**Planning for Improving Compliance on Fair Housing Standards:** Due to the absence of Jan Derry, Don Spencer presented an abbreviated report on progress on fair housing. The report was submitted in writing and emphasized the need to support the City inspection process through awareness, education and incentives. He reported on conversations with city officials including Mike Stone of the Code Enforcement Department. Having a more comprehensive discussion was delayed until the next meeting.

**Next Meeting:** Items 8, 9, 10, and 11 were again moved forward until the next meeting.

Also on the agenda will be the third report on the need survey – with an anticipation that publicity on the survey process can begin in January.

At that December meeting, it was also agreed that there should be a celebration of the first year's work of the reconstituted HRC. Hopefully there can be full attendance including the presence of Warren Harger.

The December HRC meeting will be held according to the regular schedule – Thursday, December 19, at 6:30 p.m. at the Public Safety Building.

The meeting was adjourned with approval of the membership at 8:50 p.m. with a special meeting of the HRC to review resolutions on legislative priorities to be convened on Monday, December 2, at noon at the Council Chambers.

dls/AMR-S